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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains ideas and prewriting exercises designed to motivate reluctant writers. The first section of the booklet provides suggestions for helping students become better acquainted so that they will be more receptive to peer evaluation of their work. The second section offers prewriting teaching techniques while the third section offers ideas for teaching some specific skills that are beneficial both in short, beginning exercises and in longer assignments. The fourth section provides a variety of ideas that have been used to motivate students in grades four through ten. The final section contains ideas for writing about holidays that were designed for use in grades four through six. Many of these ideas are tied to the use of bulletin boards as motivators, a technique that solves two problems--motivation and sharing students' work. (FL)

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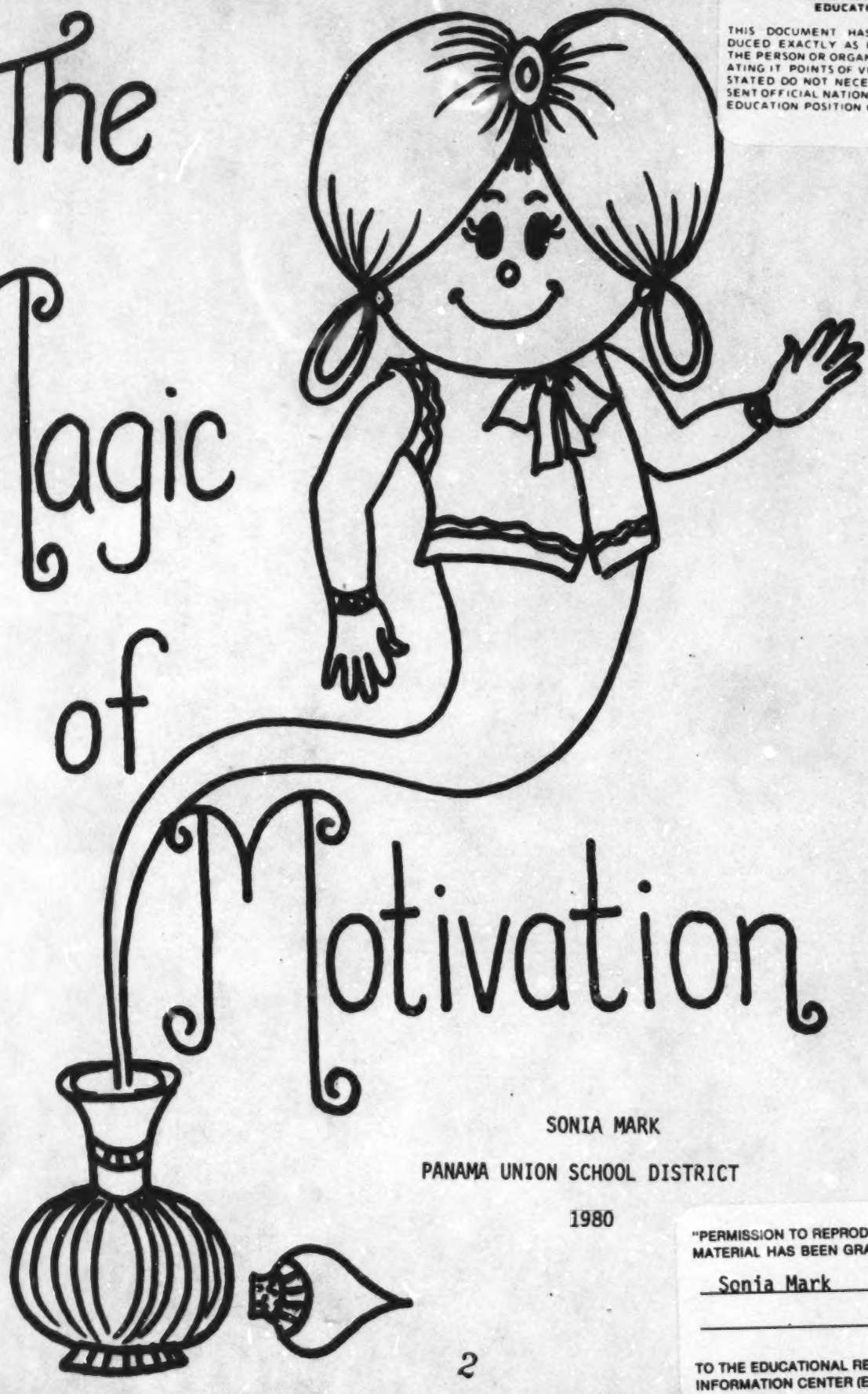
The Magic of Motivation



SONIA MARK

PANAMA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

1980

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The Magic of Motivation

Motivational Devices for Stimulating Young Writers

presented by

SONIA MARK

at the

22nd Annual CATE Conference

February 15-17, 1980

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INTRODUCTION

Last August I joined other high school and junior high school teachers in our area in the Kern Writing Project. During the past months, I have seen techniques and methods formerly used to teach writing maimed, murdered, or metamorphosed. I have become a zealous convert---or what Dick Dodge refers to as a "Born Again Writing Teacher". Both the outside speakers heard by our project's members and my colleagues have introduced me to ideas that are contemporary, exciting and refreshing. While enhancing my own interest, I've seen changes in students' interest, proving that these methods work to produce young writers that are no longer traumatized about writing, but are actually learning by writing, enjoying it, and doing well.

As part of my job as Classroom Specialist for the Panama Union School District in Bakersfield, I was responsible for overseeing the implementation of AB65. Under the guidance of our Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, we formed a committee of sixth grade teachers to work out rules for the administration of a writing proficiency test to be included as part of our proficiency evaluation for English. The committee also field-tested a number of prompts and wrote the rubric to be used for scoring.

In September, at an in-service training meeting, we trained all our sixth grade teachers to score papers using the holistic method. We also chose the testing date and the prompt for this year. All of the teachers have now administered at least one practice prompt and scored the papers using the holistic method. Some of them even like it!

Through all this practical application, I have not just maintained but increased my level of enthusiasm for the new ways of helping students write more proficiently.

One article that has exerted a tremendous influence on my thinking is "Using Research in Preparing to Teach Writing", by Elizabeth Haynes from the English Journal (Jan. 1978). After researching long-used methods for the teaching of composition, Ms. Haynes found that:

1. The study of traditional and/or transformational grammar is ineffective and inefficient as an aid to better writing.

2. Intensive correction of errors by the teacher is futile.

On the other hand, the same research reveals that the following methods are proven beneficial to students:

1. Sentence combining exercises are an aid to syntactic fluency.

2. Increased reading results in improved writing.

3. Personal and peer evaulation will limit the number of corrections the teacher must make.

4. Pre-composition techniques will provide greater opportunities for assistance and guidance from both peers and teachers.

Because of these revelations, I have encouraged the teachers in our district to revise their writing programs to include new and varied writing stimuli to be used with an increased number of pre-writing techniques.

In this booklet, I hope to share with you some ideas for topics that will stimulate reluctant writers, plus some useful pre-writing exercises that will get them started and keep them writing.

I. GETTING ACQUAINTED

Since new writing techniques include peer evaluation, it is important that the class get acquainted and become as comfortable with and as trusting of each other as possible.

A. Get acquainted Game

Process:

1. Group students in teams that have an even number of members (6 or 8 are best).

2. Give each person five small (3 x 5) cards or slips of paper.

3. Students write one brief statement on each card in answer to these questions:

   a. What is your hobby or major interest outside of school?

   b. What is your favorite recreational activity?

   c. What is your goal in life?

   d. What exciting place did you visit recently?

   e. Give a one-word description of yourself.

4. Place all the slips (cards) for one group in a box. Mix the slips.

5. The group members draw five slips (cards), returning any cards they recognize as their own.

6. All circulate and ask the other group members questions until the author of each statement has been identified. (Students write names on the cards as they find their owners.)

   Sample questions may be:

   "Are you the person who collects stamps?"
   "Are you the person who wants to be an astronaut?"

7. One person in the group begins introductions by saying: "I'd like to introduce Joe Smith whose hobby is collecting stamps."

   Others check their cards. Those who have any of Joe's cards read them to complete his introduction.

8. When all members have been introduced, each person is partnered with a person in his group that he doesn't know. The partners are given all of each other's cards.

   Note: Don't be concerned that little writing has gone on. It will probably take one day per group to finish this activity.

I. GETTING ACQUAINTED (continued)

B. You're a Celebrity!

Using the five cards plus some of the questions listed below, the partners should interview each other. Give students a time frame. (15 - 20 minutes for each interview is suggested.) The students should take notes. If your class is a low-ability group, provide interview forms for them with questions and space for writing answers. Suggested questions for interview:

1. What is the earliest thing you remember about your life?

2. What two events in your life might be of interest if written up well?

3. Name three qualities that you most admire in a person your age, and two you most dislike.

4. What was your most dramatic or embarrassing moment?

5. What makes you happy, sad, angry, afraid?

6. What do you most enjoy about school? What do you dislike most?

7. How do you think other people regard you?

When interviews are completed, ask each student to pretend he is a reporter for Teen-Scene Magazine. As a reporter he is to write a story about his interview with the teen idol (celebrity) with whom he has just spoken.

Actual writing may be done outside class or in class. Tell students the papers will not be graded. Use these to become acquainted with your students and as an indication of the most pressing general needs for remediation and/or instruction.

C. Character Sketch (Joann Border)

After interview information has been taken, you may want to give some direction before writing takes place. Sometimes it is easier to write from lists of words:

5-8 verbs
(action words to describe things the person in your interview does)

8-10 adjectives
(words that describe the person in your interview)

D. All About Me

Using the technique in C (Character Sketch), have each person write a short essay using one of these titles:

"One Thing I'm Good At" (and why), or
"What I Do Best" (explain)

I. GETTING ACQUAINTED (continued)

You may want to compare these with interviews to see how well self-images match peer-images.

E. A Family Portrait (Bob Laramie)

1. Give each student a 9" x 12" piece of construction paper and make crayolas available.

2. Instruct the students to draw their family as represented by a grove of trees. They may draw their immediate family or all the persons with whom they are closely associated. (Aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins, step-parents, etc.) They need not use traditional (green and brown) colors or shapes, but may use colors and shapes that are representative of a person's personality. Allow about fifteen to twenty minutes for drawing.

3. Now give students lined paper and ask them to explain their drawing. Describe how the trees are representational as shown by the use of color, size, shape and order. (twenty minutes)

4. Collect pictures and descriptions.

   These are not to be graded or marked. You may use them for general diagnosis of problems. If the students want to share their "family trees", you may want to allow time for this in a later session.

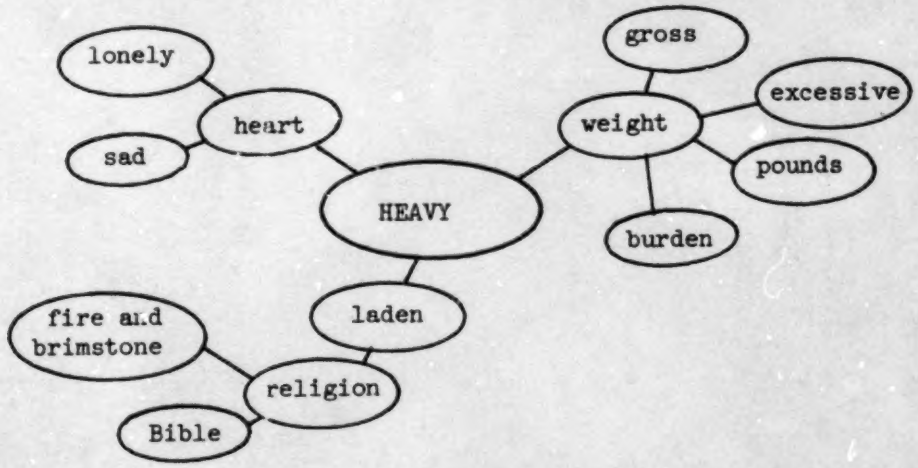
II. PRE-WRITING

Eliminates the "I can't think of anything to say---" excuse.

A. Clustering: (Janis Van Dreal)

Clustering triggers and focuses ideas. Patterns tend to emerge within the clusters and students realize that their heads are full of ideas to express.

Sample cluster:



II. PRE-WRITING (continued)

Students may include any of the words in the cluster for their paragraph or story.

B. Framing: (Janis Van Dreal)

Provides security for the student by setting the topic and pattern. But it allows the student to stretch his ideas and develop detail.

1. Sentence Frames:

a. Description

Jack and Bill are very much alike. Both _____.
Also _____. In addition _____.
On the whole _____. And yet _____.

b. Relay information

Something always happens to make Jane late for school.
Yesterday for example, _____. Just then _____.
At the same time _____. Following that _____.
In the meanwhile _____. As a result _____.

c. Lists

Every time I'm out with Bill, he does things that irritate me. For instance, _____. Another _____. Besides _____.
Often _____. Also _____ In spite of _____.

2. Paragraph Frames:

a. Comparison

One way to develop a paragraph is by comparison. This is when you show how things are alike. Use the frame below to develop a paragraph using comparison.

The commercials for Reek mouthwash and Pit Stop deodorant are very much alike. Both commercials begin with _____.
Next _____. Then _____. Besides that _____.
Furthermore _____. In fact, the only real difference is _____.

b. Cause and Effect

One way to develop a paragraph is to show cause and effect. This means that the topic sentence states the cause and the other sentences show the effect or results of the cause. Use the frame below to develop a paragraph using cause and effect.

II. PRE-WRITING (Continued)

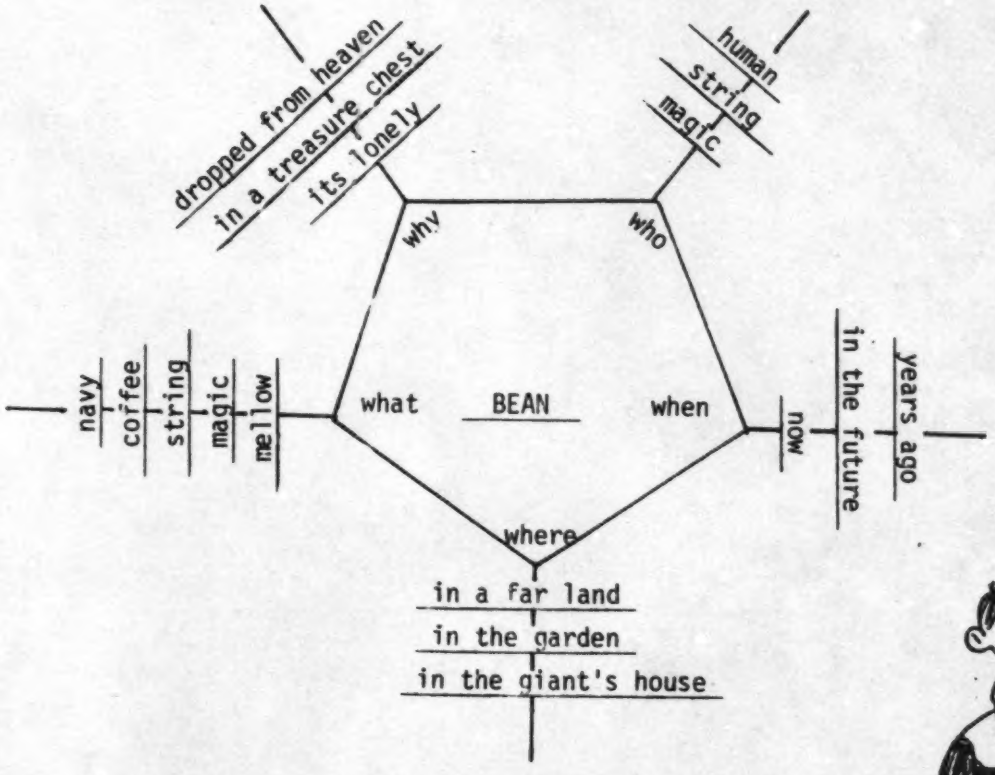
The sky grew dark, and at noon the storm broke loose.

Instantly _____. At the same time _____.
Immediately _____. Then _____.
Here and there _____. It was not until _____ .

(from Enjoying English: "Writing Clear Paragraphs".)

C. Mapping:

Mapping is an expanded type of Clustering. In addition to triggering ideas, it can focus on the 5 "W's" - who, what, why, where, when.



Have students choose one phrase from each category and write a story. This technique is especially useful with the "Inverted Pyramid" (writing a newspaper article).

III. EASING INTO WRITING

Using tasks that improve specific skills and, at the same time, act as writing stimuli can be a painless way to ease students into the writing task. They may discover that neither writing nor skill exercises are complete drudgery.

A. Sentence Combining (Joe Brackley)

This task is explained as linking kernel sentences to form larger syntactic models. William Strong, author of Sentence Combining, calls it "flexing one's linguistic muscles".

Use ideas from Strong's book or a booklet called Sentencecraft by Frank O'Hare to introduce this technique. Mr. O'Hare's book begins with tasks that give both sentences and "combining signals" (linking words) and become more difficult.

If you're interested in writing your own sentence-combining tasks, an essay by Charles Cooper, "An Outline for Writing Sentence-Combining Problems", (English Journal, January, 1973.) should guide you from simple to more complex problems.

A sample of Strong's "open" sentence-combining exercises is shown below:

ROCK CONCERT

1. The singer was young.
2. The singer was swarthy.
3. He stepped into the spotlight.
4. The spotlight was red.

5. His shirt was unbuttoned.
6. The unbuttoning bared his chest.

7. Sounds ballooned around him.
8. The sounds were of guitars.
9. The sounds were of drums.
10. The sounds were of girls.
11. The girls were screaming.

12. He nodded.
13. He winked.
14. The wink was to his guitarist.
15. The drummer responded with the beat.

16. The singer became animated.
17. His legs were like rubber.
18. His body jerked.
19. His head was thrown back.
20. He wailed a shout.
21. The shout was into the microphone.
22. The microphone was at his lips.
23. His movements were twisting.
24. His movements were strobed.
25. The strobing was with floodlights.

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

26. His voice was a garble.
27. The garble was loud.
28. The auditorium swirled.
29. The swirling was rock.
30. The rock was "heavy".

Strong believes that it is essential for the teacher to:

1. Encourage students to trust their own judgment in the solutions.

2. Try to do the exercises orally (dictate the cues).

3. Show possible transformations on the board or overhead and discuss alternative solutions.

After the students have had some practice in combining sentences, ask them to write additional sentences or another paragraph that might follow those in the exercises.

B. Expanding a Definition: (Phyllis Jung)

Explain that the dictionaries are lost. (Review what you find in a dictionary - why you need one.) Now you must write a new dictionary.

The easiest words to define are nouns. (Think of synonyms or how you use a word in context.)

Take a word like "time".

1. Write students' definitions on the board. Discuss definitions. Have them pick the one they like.

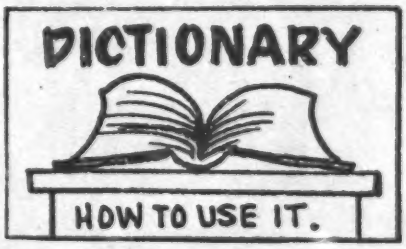
2. Have students write some phrases describing how they feel about the word.

3. Have them use the word in sentences and phrases - whatever pops into their heads.

4. Using the ideas in 1, 2, and 3, write a paragraph or two about the word.

Suggested words:

time	light	fear	memory
luck	danger	life	pride



Sample: (adults' work) Title: "Time"

Definitions:

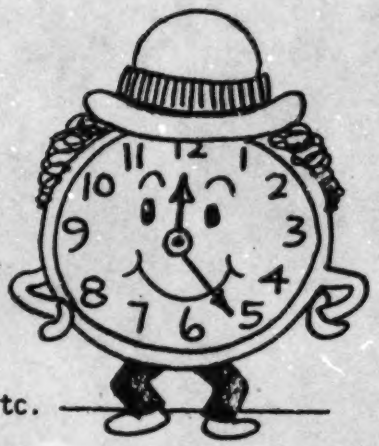
1. measurable eternity
2. a period; an element of life; space between activities.
3. only element in life that can't be stopped or recaptured.

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

(Sample using "Time", continued)

How you feel (connotative meaning):

1. Time is of the essence.
2. Wasting time is wasting life.
3. Something we always want more of.
4. Worrying about time can make you old.
5. Free time is an element of renewal.



Use in context:

1. Time is of the essence.
2. ... at this point in time.
3. the time of my life...
4. time frame
5. ...a time to plant and a time to harvest, etc. (Ecclesiastes)

Essay: (uses ideas listed above)

C. Pre-writing Suggestions:

These ideas were supplied by Dick Dodge, Co-director of the UCLA/ California Writing Project. The task is to take the lines given plus a few elements agreed upon by the class and write a story. You may want to have students do this in pairs on large sheets of butcher paper taped to the wall (or on the chalkboard). Or, the first story may be a class project.

1. First line / last line

   a. Take a kernel sentence:

      The tree stood on the cliff.

      Add some descriptive words and expand the sentence: (Place on the board.)

      The gnarled, ancient tree, bowed by the weight of centuries, stood forlornly on the barren, windswept cliff.

   b. Now, decide on a last line:

      I was home at last.

   c. Add some interesting (colorful) elements to include:

      (1) a yellow bus
      (2) a shaggy sheepdog
      (3) glaring sun
      (4) a hot, dusty road

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

d. The class (or writing partners) using the same first and last lines will write a story including the elements above.

Below are some additional first line / last lines furnished by Dick Dodge:

(1) John walked into the small, ugly room. / One by one the distant lights disappeared into the still blackness of the night.

(2) Supernatural events are not so uncommon as some people might think. / I decided to walk home along the beach and laugh some more, loud enough for the sound to be heard on the other side of the world.

(3) The day broke gray and dull. The clouds hung heavily and there was a chill in the air that suggested snow. / They got up and walked out of the _____. The sun was shining.

2. First Line / Second Line

a. Descending the slippery rocks, I found the cave again. Entering, there suddenly appeared a strange light, and I saw _____.

b. "Nobody understands me. Nobody! Why can't you all just go away and leave me alone."

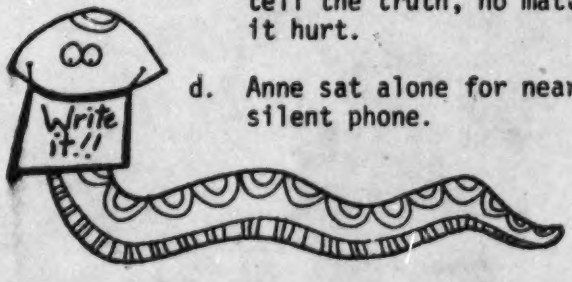
c. The last man on earth sat in his lonely room. Suddenly, there was a knocking at the door.

3. Opening Lines

a. Fourth down and inches to go.

b. Starting all over again was the hardest thing he'd ever had to do in his life.

c. Betsy no longer had a choice -- tonight she would have to tell the truth, no matter what happened, no matter how much it hurt.



d. Anne sat alone for nearly five hours, staring at the silent phone.

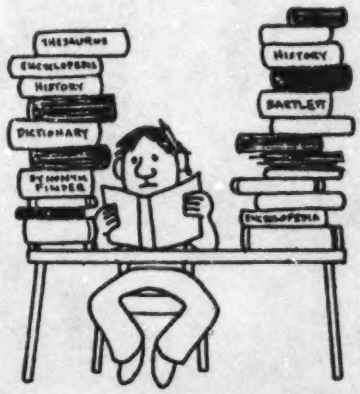
III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

D. Using a Thesaurus (Darlene Thrasher)

1. Once I Dreamed That...

Give the students a short (one or two paragraphs) writing task. Help them get started by using clustering or mapping.

Since most of us have dreamed about being chased by some horrible animal, person or machine, a good topic is "Someone is Chasing You". If you have a slow group, write your story together. Put it on an overhead or the board.



When the first draft is done, show the students how to use the thesaurus to enlarge their vocabularies and make their stories more interesting and exciting by replacing commonly used adverbs with different describing words.

Other good "story starters" that need plenty of descriptive words are:

The Monster
The Storm
Nature (Sunrise, Sunset, Mountains, etc.)
A Color (Blue, Green, etc.) Makes Me Feel. . .
The Old Trunk in the Attic
One Hundred Years From Now. . .

2. Adventures with Adjectives

To elicit a follow-up composition, give students a list of common nouns, such as: boy, dog, lake, wind, water, forest. Ask them to develop a short story or descriptive paragraph which includes at least two describing words for each noun. Remind them to avoid the use of such overworked adjectives as: big, small, beautiful, pretty, blue, cold, bad.

3. Draw a Word Picture

A third assignment can include both effective adjectives and adverbs. To begin, give each student an envelope in which he will find five small pictures which must be incorporated into the story. (Cut the pictures from magazines. One sample envelope contained pictures of: a rose, an ancient sailing ship, a scuba diver, a statue of an eagle and an Indian totem pole.)

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

E. You Can Quote Me (Dana Hollister)

To simplify the confusion frequently found when teaching direct quotations, use cartoon strips as material. Peanuts, B.C., and The Born Loser are excellent for this exercise.

Dot'n Bill
Why don't you go out and get me a nice cold glass of milk?
Why don't you go jump in the lake?
I think that remark probably qualifies you for the "Grouch Of The Year" Award!
A fella really has to be careful of his public image..
S.M.

Below the cartoon, draw a mouth with "talk lines" on either side:

Discuss the fact that when we read a cartoon we know who is talking because the words the people say are in balloons that come out of their mouths. However, when we write them down in a story, they look this this:

Why don't you go out and get me a nice cold glass of milk? asked Dot.

Question: How can we tell what words she actually said?

Answer: Draw a balloon around them.

(Finish all sentences with balloons.)

Lead your students to admit that this is a pretty awkward way to denote a direct quotation. Instead, suggest that they replace the balloons with the "talk lines" found at the corner of the mouth. (These should remind them that the words inside each pair are the words that actually came from the mouth of the speaker.)

Follow-up lessons contain a ditto of a cartoon with lines below on which to write the dialogue in its proper form. Remind them that the words in the balloons go in quotation marks and that you indent for a new paragraph each time you change speakers.

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

E. You Can Quote Me (continued)

Longer strips that come from comic books or the Sunday comics will provide a greater challenge.

A more creative task is provided later by providing a cartoon with the words omitted, allowing the students to write their own dialogue.

SILLY SAM
SAL'S T-SHIRTS
I'd like to look at T-shirts
I have just the thing
What size, please?
I usually wear a 40
Don't you think it's a little tight in the hips?
SM

F. Following Directions

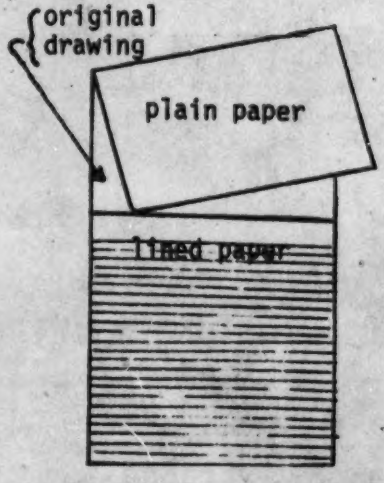
1. "The Awfullest, Yuckiest Recipe Ever" (Sandy Banducci)

The students are invited to write the most nauseous recipe they can. They must use eight ingredients and decide on measurements for each. Then, they are required to write complete, clear, concise directions.

During the pre-writing session, you may want to discuss the kinds of directions that are found in a recipe. (Bring a few samples from home.) This is fun at Hallowe'en.

2. "How to Draw A..." (Florence Schuetze)

Give each student a piece of plain white construction paper (9"x12") and a lined sheet. Have them glue the lined sheet to a 9" side of the plain one. Fold the plain paper in half, bringing the top of it down to the top of the lined piece.



Have the student draw a simple picture or design on the inside, lower half of the plain paper. (Be sure it is simple or the task gets too complicated.)

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

F. Following Directions-"How to Draw a..." (continued)

Be sure they title the picture to include the item to be drawn in the title. (This is not a guessing game.) Example: "How to Draw a Geometric Design" or "How to Draw a Winter Scene".

When the students have completed their directions, have them fold over the drawing and tape it on each side. This gives a clear half-sheet of art paper at the top of the directions.

Have the students trade papers with a partner. Now, following the directions given, each one tries to produce his partner's picture.

When both are finished, they check pictures for accuracy and discuss what would have made the directions more clear or complete.

The original author should then revise his directions and turn them in for the teacher's perusal.

This is tough, but not impossible if the pictures are kept simple. A second experience like this always goes better.

G. Selling an Idea (Barbara Mitchell)

Discuss with your students the language (types of words) you use when you're trying to convince someone to do something. Example: "How do you talk to your dad when you want him to give you an advance on your allowance? How do you approach your mother when you want permission to go somewhere special?"

Hand out the following information. Discuss the problem, then let each student produce his "sales pitch".

These are fun to read aloud!

Possible Problems:

1. The most attractive guy in school has asked if you can go bowling Saturday. (Or, the girl of your dreams has asked you to help her with her tennis game.) You are thrilled.

   But suddenly your happiness is shattered. Your mother tells you your Cousin Grendyl (or Klutz) is coming to town and you are expected to entertain her/him for the weekend. How do you find a partner for the most unattractive, most boring person in the world?

   Grendyl (Klutz) is a real monster. She (he) is about 5'8" and weighs about 300 pounds. She (he) eats so many sweets that her (his) teeth are rotten and her (his) face is broken out in pimples. You wonder if even Clearasil would help. And, if she (he) ever washes that stringy hair, you'll be surprised.

III. EASING INTO WRITING (continued)

G. Selling an Idea - Possible Problems (continued)

However, you are reminded that you can't tell a book by its cover. Grendyl (Klutz) could still have a great personality. Wrong! She (He) doesn't. Her (His) manners are horrid. She (He) interrupts when other are talking; laughs with her (his) mouth full of food; belches loudly; insults people constantly; and laughs only when someone's feelings are hurt.

You won't have to change your plans if you can just talk your best friend Jill (or Jack) into helping to entertain your awful cousin. How will you tell Jill (Jack) about Grendyl (Klutz) and still be able to persuade her (him) to help you out of your predicament?

Remember: You catch more flies with honey than vinegar!

Grendyl Klutz

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS

Many of the materials and instructional devices already being used make excellent motivators for expository or creative writing. Or, the innovative teacher (collector) can always find a use for that "junk" he's been saving for years.

A. Writing from Children's Books (Kathy Sullivan)

Young children's books can provide excellent motivation for writing because they are brief, use concise language, are easy to read, and provide a universality of experience.

1. For example, after you read "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day", by Viorst, you can discuss similar horrible, bad days that your students have had. Then have them write about their experiences. You may want to make a class book entitled "Our Class and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day". Or, the stories can be illustrated and used on a bulletin board.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

A. Writing from Children's Books - examples (continued)

2. Since size change fascinates children, read them "Tiger Flower" by Vavra. The "Shrinking of Treehorn" by Heide, and "Stanley" by Syd Hoff are also good story starters.

Leading questions to ask are:

Imagine you are very small (or large).

a. How small (or large) are you? Compare yourself to something with which the reader can identify.

b. Where are you? Why are you there?

c. What do you see around you? How does it look to you?

d. How do you live----get places, etc.?

e. How do other react to you?

2. Also useful as motivators are:

a. "Fables for Our Time", Thurber

b. "Mr. and Mrs. Pig and the Evening Out", Rayner

c. "Petronella", Williams.

d. "Alexander Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday", Viorst

e. Any of a number of wordless picture books.

B. Myths (Kip Hearron)

Myths may be used like children's literature to spark ideas for writing. Myths should be explained as stories from the imagination, triggered by something in nature, but not understood. Read selections from Indian tales, Greek, Roman or Norse mythology. Discuss these ideas:

1. The force behind a myth comes from nature, gods or animals with human characteristics.

2. Myths combine fantasy and reality.

3. Natural phenomena or the unique physical characteristics of some animals may be explained through a myth.

Some topics that will intrigue your students are:

a. An erupting volcano
b. A whirling tornado
c. Snowfall or snowflakes
d. An earthquake
e. An avalanche

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

B. Myths -- Natural Phenomena or unique physical----(continued)

f. A giraffe's long neck
g. A zebra's stripes
h. A beaver's flat tail

You may want to write a myth as a class. Mapping is a perfect pre-writing technique for this task.

C. Let's Pretend

Many creative writing tasks fall into the category of "Let's Pretend". Any time the student places himself in a role, be it that of another person, an animal, or as the personification of an inanimate object, he is stretching his imagination.

1. Pretend You Are..... (Sandra Banducci)

Assign your students the task of writing a first-person descriptive essay in which they pretend to be an object. Give them fifteen to twenty minutes to write a description of the object, using the following questions as a possible guide:

a. How do you look (size, shape, color, weight, etc.)?

b. How do you feel toward other objects and people?

c. Do you have a job? What is it? How do you feel about it?

If necessary to get the class started, choose a topic and do some mapping or framing together. A possible topic is "Being a Pencil". Sample:

If I were a pencil, I would be long and slim. I would be a shiny new pencil with a clean, square-edged eraser on one end and a nice sharp point on the other. I think I would be a number two pencil because I like to fill in the little bubbles on computer answer sheets. I would like to be bright turquoise in color so that I wouldn't be just like all the other yellow ones in the box.

On weekends, I get lonely but usually my friend Bobby is here at school and using me. My biggest enemy is rough paper because it tends to wear me down faster than nice slick paper. Another thing I hate is to be put into the sharpener. If it doesn't work right, it certainly shortens my life. Most people are pretty nice to work for, but I can do without those that have no feelings for pencils and chew me, tear off my eraser, or deliberately break me. Being a pencil is really an exciting life!

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

C. Let's Pretend - Suggested topics

telephone booth	automobile
rocking chair	desk or table
paper clip	frying pan
fire hydrant	checkbook
brook	

These are suggestions. You may want to invent one of your own.

It is also fun to write these essays without mentioning the object described. Then, have the students read them aloud and guess the topic.

2. Role-playing (Barbara Mitchell)

A novelist imagines people with a given set of characteristics placed in certain situations. He builds his novel on his characters' reactions to new and different circumstances. He may ask: How will they react in a crisis? How will they interact with new characters?

Each student should be assigned the task of imagining himself in a different role.

a. He should list the necessary qualities or traits for that role.

b. He should list the positive traits he has that would help fit the role.

c. He should list the traits he has that would make the role difficult for him.

Using the three lists, the student should write an essay describing his new role and his reactions to himself in that new and different situation.

Suggested roles:

A nun or a priest	A "pops" singer or a musician
An actor or actress	A hot-rod racer
A teacher of small children	A spy
An inventor	A representative at the United Nations
An astronaut	A famous writer
A doctor or dentist	A senator
A professional sports player	
Coach of a professional sports team	
Any idea of your own that you would like to imagine.	

In junior high school, this could lead to a discussion of possible careers with students choosing to research a career that interests them and writing a follow-up essay.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

C. Let's Pretend (continued)

3. Personality Sketch

Following an assignment in which the students are to read a biography or autobiography, have them choose what they feel is that person's most outstanding quality and write about it. (This is a great way to handle a book report.) Students are reminded to:

a. Decide what you want to share with your audience: appearance, personality trait, or both.

b. Consider your purpose. Is it to amuse, inform, entertain, or merely to describe?

c. Jot down as many ideas as you can. Remember to include sensory images as well as physical ones in a description. Restrict yourself to a single personality trait: Humor, kindness, loyalty, etc. Use examples.

d. Arrange your ideas in order, adding, omitting, and changing your original notes. You may want to use a brief outline.

e. Write your sketch, using statements, dialogue, and personal opinions or reactions.

f. Remember to keep it simple; use a strong introduction (question, anecdote, interesting statement of fact); use the organization from step "d" for the body; use a summary or restatement of the topic as your conclusion.

D. Drama

In an effort to get students' attention, the teacher today is often hard pressed to compete with television, loud music, and the excitement of sports. But, you don't have to be Wonder Woman, Gladys Knight, or Roger Stauback to instill a little drama into the lives of your students. All the world loves a ham! Even if they giggle and/or groan, your students will appreciate your efforts.

1. It's In The Bag (Brenda Hallum)

This is the teacher's big, dramatic moment, so play it to the hilt!

Walk to the front of the class carrying a large paper bag. (Contains paper, small bags, any other "filler" items you may want to use.) Put it on a chair or table and unload it (all pantomime).

Now you say, "Darn, I forgot potatoes (or whatever)". Rip a piece off the bag and write a note. Folding the bag, say, "I guess I'll save this to line the trash can".

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTAVITORS (continued)

D. Drama - It's In the Bag (continued)

Glance down. "Oops! It looks like Rover's papers need changing." Tear the sack carefully to make it flat and place it on the floor as a 'dog paper'. Walk on it.

Ask the students,"How do you think it would feel to be a paper bag? Today, we're going to pretend to be one".

"Just so that you get a feel for the project, I'm going to give you each a small sack. (Pass out small bags.) Now, what are some of the ways you can think of to use a paper bag?"

Write "bag" on the board. Use clustering to get all students' ideas down.

When they are ready to write, tell them to save their bags carefully because they will be able to use it for an art project later in the week. They will be able to use it for potato printing, torn paper art, a puppet, or drawing a scene or design.

When the stories are written, edited and copied in their final forms, allow the students time to use their bags in an art project. Print "It's In the Bag" on a grocery bag. Display stories and art work on a bulletin board.

2. Getting Involved (Brenda Hallum)

To involve everyone in a dramatic device, have all students stand beside their desks.

You say, "We are all going to climb a very tall ladder. Get your ladder firmly set. Start climbing. Don't look down! We're getting to the top. Oh, no! The ladder's shaking----it's falling! Ohhh"..Plop! (Fall into your chair.)

"What did we fall into? What is this stuff? Pull it off your hands. Yuck! It's greasy! It doesn't smell too bad. Yumm. It tastes good! Now, I know---it's a giant jar of peanut butter."

Now, instruct the students to write about their adventure in a peanut butter jar. Suggest these questions to lead their thinking:

a. Who (What)are you?
b. How did you get here?
c. How can you describe your feelings about your predicament?
d. How can you get out?

3. Skits (Chuck Rosengard)

a. Employ one of your students who likes to "act" to rush into the room yelling, "Help! It's after me! Save me!" He runs to hide behind you, continuing his pleas for help.

You grab him and try to assure him that nothing is after him. He disagrees, pointing to "the thing" that's chasing him.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

D. Drama - Skits (continued)

Now that the class is involved in his predicament, have them describe what is chasing their classmate (or themselves, if they prefer first-person stories) and how he can get away.

Since everyone has dreamed of this situation, it's not too difficult to get some good stories. Use this motivator with item III D., Using a Thesaurus.

b. Dress a student in a scruffy old wig and some sloppy clothes. Have him play the part of a "hippy". You (or another student) play the housewife with a grocery sack or businessman with important papers in hand. You walk across the front of the room. Each has his mind on other things, so you collide. Whatever is being carried (groceries or papers) is scattered all over the floor.

The businessman (housewife) begins to berate the "hippy" for the accident. He (she) says things like:

"Why don't you watch where you're going?"
"You dirty creature, why don't you wash or comb your hair?"
"Why aren't you in school?" Or,
"Why don't you have a job?"
"You're just a bum!"
"The least you could do is apologise!" (etc., etc.)

Each row or group of students is now asked to play a role as the class writes its reactions to this little drama. Each row or group takes the viewpoint of:

(1) The policeman walking his beat;
(2) The 10-year-old playing nearby;
(3) A teen-ager riding by on his bike;
(4) An old man sitting on a park bench;
(5) A housewife or businessman (whichever is not used above).

When reactions are complete, you may want to discuss them as a group. This is a good lead-in to the discussion of point-of-view, audience, and objective versus subjective reporting.

4. Be a Celebrity (Brenda Hallum / Florence Schuetze)

a. Have a student tie a piece of sheet around him for a cape and don any type of hat. (Your husband's barbecue hat, army hat, old ski hat, etc.) He should race into the room, flexing his muscles and announce, "I'm Superchef", (or whatever) and I can:

(1) Leap a strawberry shortcake taller than the Empire State Building.

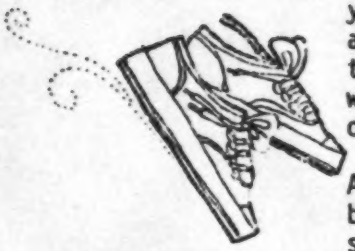
(2) Eat a hot fudge sundae bigger than the Queen Mary.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

D. Drama - Be A Celebrity (continued)

(3) Drink enough chocolate milk to fill your bathtub.

b. Walk into the room carrying the scruffiest old tennis shoes you can find. Announce importantly, "These tennis shoes are famous! They belonged to Nicholas Bradford and he gave them to me for a souvenir." Since most of your students watch "Eight is Enough", they can identify with your feelings of awe.



Ask the students to imagine all the places these shoes have been and all the things they've done. Then have them write a story from the point of view of Nicholas' shoes. Remind them to tell not only where they've been and what they've done (seen) but how they felt about their adventures.

E. Just for Fun (Darlene Thrasher)

Students need to practice writing on a variety of subjects in order to become proficient enough to pass the required test (AB-65).

The following list includes only a few of the possible topics (prompts) you will want to try.

1. If you could live any place in the world, describe where you'd choose to live and why. Be specific and supply details, reasons, etc.

2. You have invented a fantastic invention that could change life, as we know it, on earth. Describe your invention and its importance.

3. You are a book, a television set, or a radio. Explain how you're used, how you're helpful, how you're misused, your importance, etc.

4. You are a toy or a piece of sports equipment. Describe yourself, how you're used and treated and how you feel about your treatment.

5. If you had a million dollars, how would you spend your money? Explain why you'd spend your money that way.

6. We have an energy crisis. We must conserve gasoline and electricity. Describe how you might find solutions for this situation and how these solutions would be successful.

7. You are an animal. Describe what you look like, where you live, how you live, what you enjoy doing, etc. Introduce yourself and give your reactions to things and others in your life.

8. If you could have any job you want, what would you do? Explain why you'd select this job, what you'd do, and its effect on the rest of your life.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVATORS (continued)

E. Just for Fun (continued)

9. If you were a state or national lawmaker, what new laws would you pass? Why would you pass these laws? How would people benefit from them?

10. You are a valuable object. Explain what you are, why you're valuable, your appearance, etc.

11. If you could plan a perfect vacation, what would yours be? Describe where it would take place, what you'd do, and why.

12. A strange, unexplainable light is seen in the sky. What happens? What are your feelings and reactions?

Two books that have some great ideas for story starters are:

Creative Writing Roundup by Linda Schwartz; published by The Learning Works in Santa Barbara.

The Writing Corner by Arnold B. Cheyney; published by Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc. of Santa Monica

(My copies came from the Teachers' Book Club.)

V. HOLIDAY SPECIAL

Holidays offer special opportunities for students to write about things they like. There are numerous idea books containing collections of story-starters for each season. The following are a few of my favorites:

A. Columbus Day

The teacher should read an account of Columbus' Voyage. Ask the students to think about the physical and emotional hardships endured by both the seamen and leaders. You may want to list on the board the students' comments and ideas. Discuss possible adventures (things the adventurers might have seen or experienced for the first time).

Then let the students choose from these topics:

1. Tell about life on a sailing ship in the 1490's.

2. Tell how you (a seaman) felt when you first saw land.

3. If you were Columbus, what would you tell about the voyage?

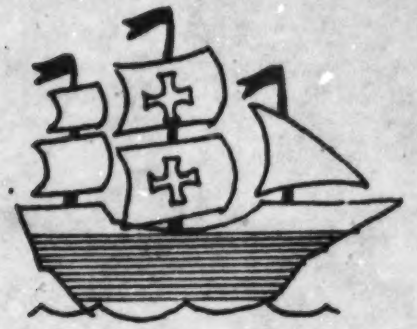
Alternative: (See next page.)

V. HOLIDAY SPECIAL (continued)

A. Columbus Day - Alternative (continued)

Write a poem about:

1. How it feels to be an explorer.
2. How the ocean looks way out in the middle.
3. How you would feel during a fierce ocean storm.



Have the students edit their original copies.

Write the finished product on a ship ditto. They should finish the ship by adding masts and sails.

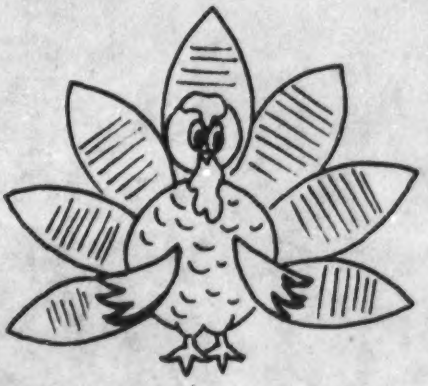
B. Hallowe'en

There are two pages of ideas for Hallowe'en that follow. Wilhelmina Witch may use the alias Gwendolyn Ghoul or Sally Skeleton.

The Yuckiest Recipe idea found on page 12 (III, F, 1.) is a sure winner for this holiday.

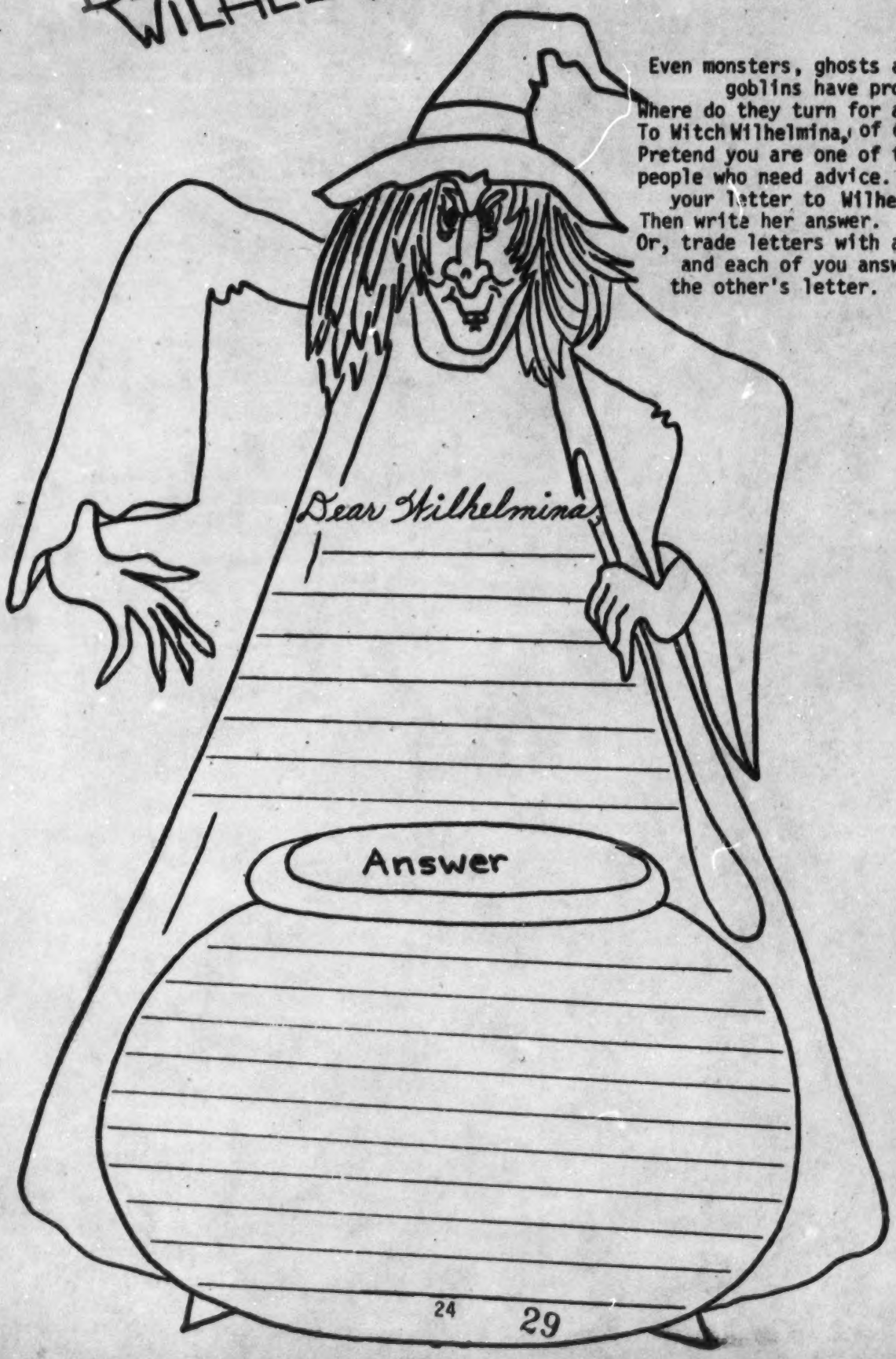
C. Thanksgiving

1. Make a ditto for large, various colored turkey feathers. Make a large turkey to put them on. Staple the turkey to a bulletin board bearing the caption, "I'm Most Thankful For....."



DEAR WILHELMINA,

Even monsters, ghosts and goblins have problems. Where do they turn for advice? To Witch Wilhelmina, of course! Pretend you are one of these people who need advice. Write your letter to Wilhelmina. Then write her answer. Or, trade letters with a friend and each of you answer the the other's letter.



CAST A SPELL... WRITE & TELL...

Cast a spell, then write and tell. Either use a bulletin board or ditto to invite your students to participate in this creative writing adventure. As the spells are finished in all their gory detail, put them up on display. May be used as extra-fun bonus or a regular creative writing assignment.

SPOOKY RHYMES

Make up a poem about Halloween. Rewrite a nursery rhyme: Little Moe Mostly said,
"I feel ghostly,
From eating a Halloween pie.
I think I"ll go haunting and shrieking and taunting,
And show what a big ghost am I."

(These poems may be fun to share with the lower grades.)

MYSTERIOUS MESSAGES

The stimulation for this creative writing activity begins when the teacher arranges for some mysterious letters to arrive, signed by a variety of suitably scary characters: Frankenstein, Count Dracula, the Wicked Witch of the West, Marley"s Ghost. These letters can be especially exciting if they come addressed to individual students. If time limits prevent this, you may want to post one or two "open" letters for all the class to read and answer. Messages should contain some kind of problem or a question that deserves an answer.

EXAMPLE: Dear Young Human, Halloween is getting closer at last. But I have a terrible problem, which you must help me solve. Each day I am getting weaker. My arms hardly move at all. Soon I will stop in my tracks. It's my batteries. I thought I could get recharged from your tape recorder. But it must be right away.

Please write back quickly and tell me when I can meet you and where. It must not be a public place. I know I can trust you. Monstrously yours, Frankenstein

Dear Chris, Halloween is next week, and since you are the scariest person I know, I thought I'd drop over that night. Can you think of something to do? Last year, I spent the whole evening watching TV because I'd run out of scary things to do for Halloween. Write me a note and let me know your plans.
Your fiendish friend, Count Dracula

Provide a Monster Motif mailbox for depositing replies. Some time may be spent by opening the replies and reading them aloud, if you desire.

V. HOLIDAY SPECIAL (continued)

C. Thanksgiving (continued)

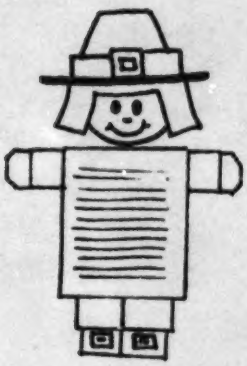
When students have written on the feathers, have them cut them out and staple them behind the turkey. This is a very impressive display.

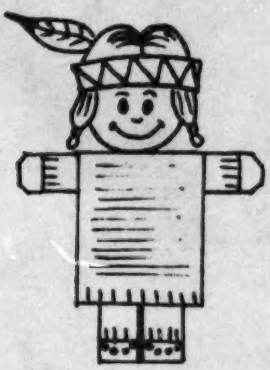
Alternative is to make a larger version of the side-view turkey. Make lines on feathers the long way, rather than across the feather ditto.

2. After you read a factual account of the First Thanksgiving, have children pretend they were Indians at the original feast. Discuss what happened and how the Indians probably felt.

Or, have them pretend they were Pilgrims and write an account of the Thanksgiving celebration.

Make patterns for Indian or boy and girl Pilgrims. Glue finished copies of stories on brown paper (black for Pilgrims) and use these for bodies. Attach appropriately colored arms, legs and heads. Group for an attractive bulletin board display.





D. Christmas

1. Make a large angel for your bulletin board. Her skirt is basically a triangle. Her wings are black paper and pink tissue paper cut to resemble a stained glass window. On her skirt, put the words "If I Were An Angel...." Make a ditto of an angel that is similar and has lines on the skirt on which to write.

V. HOLIDAY SPECIAL (continued)

D. Christmas (continued)

The students write "If I Were An Angel....":

a. On Top of the Tree
b. In the Christmas Play
c. Someone's Guardian Angel
d. Any Angel you imagine

2. Read a young children's Christmas story to your students. Have them write a short story for a young child, age 4 - 7. Remind them to keep it simple. Let them illustrate their stories. Have them read the best ones to the lower grade classes.

3. Read about and discuss various Christmas traditions: Tree, wreath, Santa Claus, gifts, etc. Have the children write about their favorite family tradition.

4. Have students bring their favorite Christmas recipes from home. Allow them to copy the ingredients and familiarize themselves with the directions. Ask them to write directions for making their favorite thing.

E. New Year's Day

See the ideas called "The 'Write' Resolution" which follows this page.

The 'WRITE' RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION WRITING (grades 3-6)

Many years ago, the people of England cleaned their chimneys on New Year's Day. This custom was supposed to bring good luck. Today, we try to to make the new year better than the last by resolving to 'clean up our lives'. Your students may want to write resolutions incorporating but not restricted to the following ideas:

A resolution you want to make.

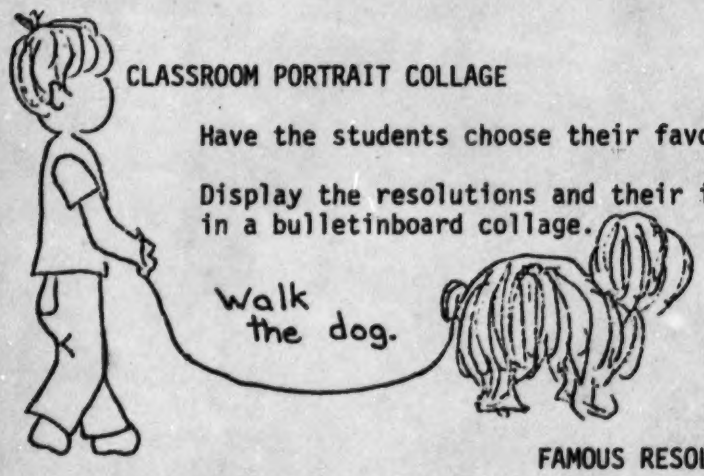
A resolution you should make.

A resolution you would like your parents to make.

A resolution you would like your teacher to make.

A resolution you would like your principal to make.

A resolution you would like the President of the United States to make.



CLASSROOM PORTRAIT COLLAGE

Have the students choose their favorite resolution and illustrate it.

Display the resolutions and their illustrations in a bulletinboard collage.

FAMOUS RESOLUTIONS

Have the students choose a famous person (real or fictional) and make a New Year's resolution for him that might have changed (or could change) the whole course of his life. Suggestions for starters might be:

Napoleon	George Washington
Babe Ruth	Richard Nixon
Alice in Wonderland	Nancy Drew
Florence Nightengale	Martin Luther King

V. HOLIDAY SPECIAL (continued)

F. St. Valentine's Day

Expressing emotions and poetic form seem to go together. Make sure your students realize that poetry need not rhyme. (Adapted from The Writing Corner by Arnold B. Cheyney.)
Types of poems that children enjoy writing are:

1. Two-word Poems

These may be as long as the poet wishes, but each line has only two words. Sample:

Valentine cards:
Lovely words,
Crimson hearts,
Golden cupids,
Sweet sentiments
Of love.

2. Color Me Blue

Have students choose a color and write whatever that color brings to mind. Have them think of all the places and things they see of that color. Using the two lists, have then write a poem.

You may want to suggest that they use different shades and hues to give variety to the poem.

Sample:

Red

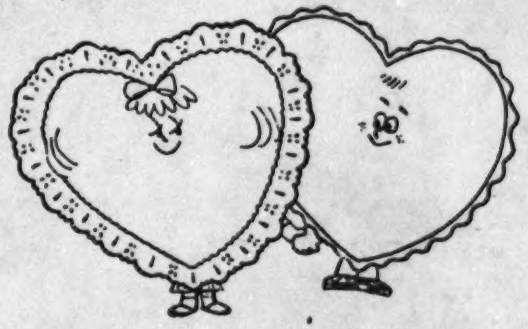
Red is a velvet heart.
Red is the fire's flame.
Red is the evening sky.
Red is a ribbon in her hair.

3. What's in a Name?

Have the students use their names or those of their favorite Valentine to write a vertical poem.

Sample:

Sensitive to people.
Others come first.
Needs to be loved.
Imaginative.
Ambitious.



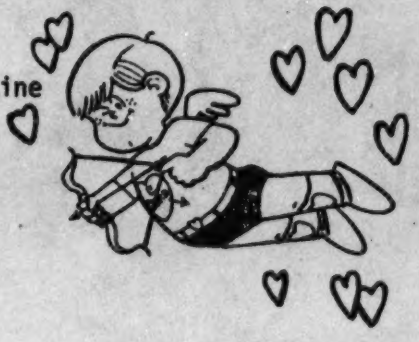
V. HOLIDAY SPECIAL (continued)

F. Valentine's Day (continued)

4. Number Please

Students should write their numbers vertically. Then after each digit, write a word or words with that number of syllables.

Sample:



8 There once was a red Valentine
3 Sent with love
1 To
6 A sweet, lovely lady
2 Plus some
7 Chocolate covered candy
5 And pink carnations.

G. Easter

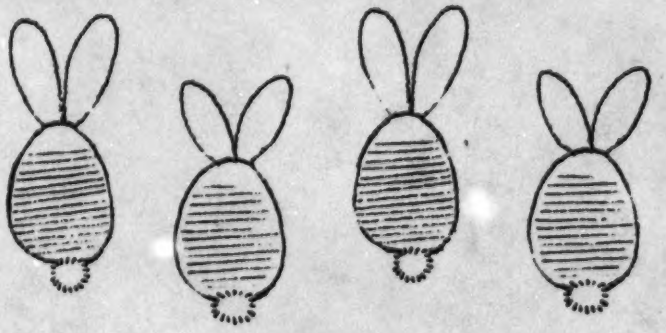
1. Bunny Tales

a. Have students write an Easter story for a younger child. Use the same technique as for the Christmas story. (V. D.,2)

b. Suggest that students imagine themselves as an Easter egg or chocolate bunny who brings happiness to boys and girls. Be sure they describe the character and tell what it does to make children happy.

c. Use one of the story starters on the page called "Sunny Side Up".

Whatever prompt the students use, have them write the final copy on an egg-shaped ditto. Use the ditto as the body for a bunny. Add ears and a piece of cotton for a tail. Make a bulletin board called Bunny Tales.



PANAMA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM LAB

SUNNY SIDE UP

DIRECTIONS: Glue story starters on cardstock. Place in plastic Easter eggs. Have children select an egg, then write and illustrate the story found inside. The stories may be copied in egg-shaped books with a decorated cover. Or, they may be copied on egg-shaped dittos and used as the body for a Bunny Tales bulletin board.

1. What Christmas job could the Easter Bunny hold?
2. Write an autobiography about your life as a jelly bean.
3. You have just landed on Pluto and it's Easter. Plan an Easter celebration for the planet.
4. You have been shipwrecked on an island where there are no Easter goodies. Tomorrow is Easter and you must fill a basket for a friend. Describe what you will use.
5. When Mrs. James went to the henhouse to gather eggs she saw....
6. A big white bunny hopped into the hen yard, went to Mrs Hen and said, ".....
7. Ross went down to the creek to look for oval shaped stones. He carried his paint box with him. _____
8. Janice lived in a large city. One Easter she made a wish.....
9. Little Brown Cottontail pretended she was a big white Easter bunny.
10. Pretend you are the owner of a famous hat shop. You have just received an order from the Queen of England for the most unusual and beautiful Easter bonnet in the world. Describe what you would do, the materials you would use and what the finished product would look like.
11. Design a modern Easter Egg factory.
12. Make a list of all the words that make you think of Easter. Illustrate the words to make a picture dictionary.
13. If I were the Easter Bunny, I would.....
14. Pretend you just won first prize for the most beautifully decorated Easter egg in a contest. Describe how you look and how you feel about winning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following participants in the Kern Writing Project were each instrumental in some way for the production of this booklet. Their influence has brought about a major change in my thinking and teaching of writing skills. Many of the materials found in the booklet are directly attributable to their suggestions.

Our project director, Beverly Banks, of the Kern High School District, has made an enormous contribution through her leadership of our sessions and her moral support during the preparation and presentation of these ideas.

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Phyllis Jung---------- Foothill High School
Gary Weinstein---------- Foothill High School
Joann Border---------- Garces High School
Janis Van Dreal---------- North High School
Kathy Sullivan---------- Our Lady of Perpecual Help
Brenda Hallum---------- Panama Union School District
Darlene Thrasher---------- Panama Union School District
Wanda Stark---------- Panama Union School District
Dr. Anitra Gehrke---------- South High School
Bud Lindsay---------- South High School
Sandra Tanzer---------- Standard Junior High School
Chuck Rosengard---------- Phoenix Learning Center
Sandra Banducci---------- Bakersfield High School
Tom Burke---------- Bakersfield High School
Ron Brown---------- Horizon High School (Keys)
Betty Newman---------- Edison District - Orangewood School

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